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! This release has ceased

Work-Related Training and Adult Learning

Participation in work-related training and formal study and barriers to participation.

Reference period 2024-25 financial year

Released 9/04/2026

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Key statistics

In 2024-25:

- 34% of people (6.8 million) aged 15-74 years participated in study or training in the last 12 months, a decrease from 39% in 2020-21
- Participation in work-related training decreased to 19% from 23% in 2020-21
- Having too much work or not enough time was the main barrier for 44% of people who had barriers to work-related training
- 17% of people who did work-related training incurred personal costs for their most recent training.

Data presented on this page is from the 2024-25 Survey of Work-Related Training and Adult Learning (WRTAL) and is the last release from this four-yearly survey. The ABS is exploring user needs and available resourcing to inform the development of a potential new Education and Skills survey that better aligns with contemporary data priorities.

Participation in study or training

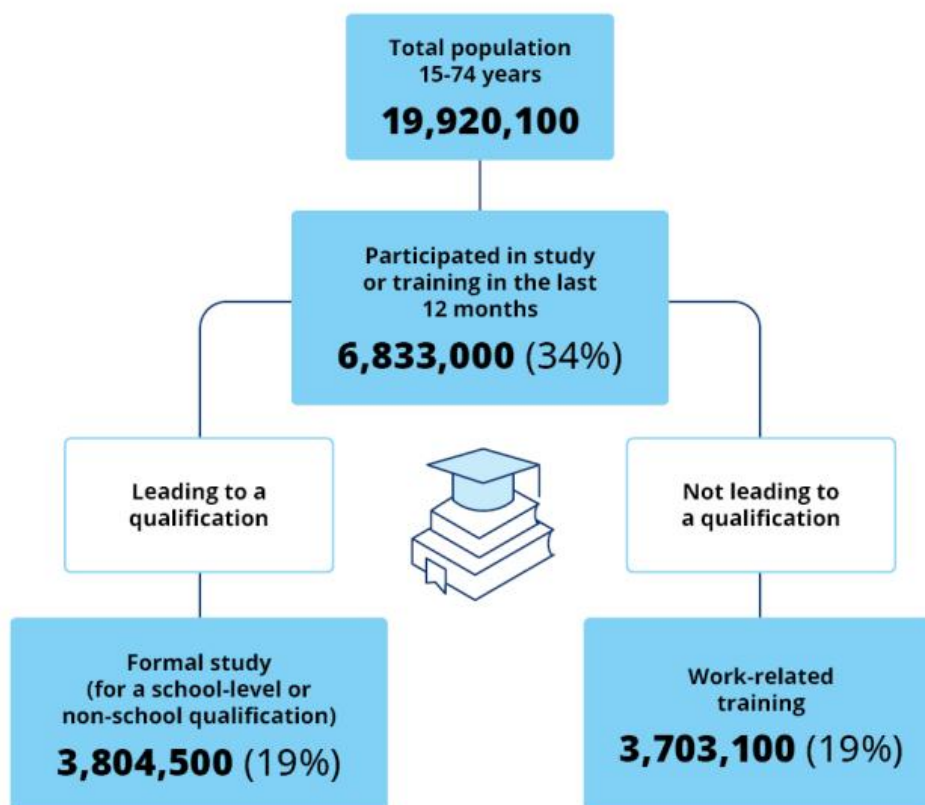
In 2024-25, 34% of people (6.8 million) aged 15-74 years participated in study or training in the 12 months before completing the survey. This was a decrease from 39% (almost 7.3 million people) in 2020-21.

This learning may have been:

- formal study for a school-level or non-school qualification such as a certificate, diploma or degree
- work-related training which did not form part of a qualification and was done for work purposes
- both formal study and work-related training.

The proportion of people who studied for a formal qualification was similar to those who undertook work-related training (both 19%).

Forms of learning in the survey(a)



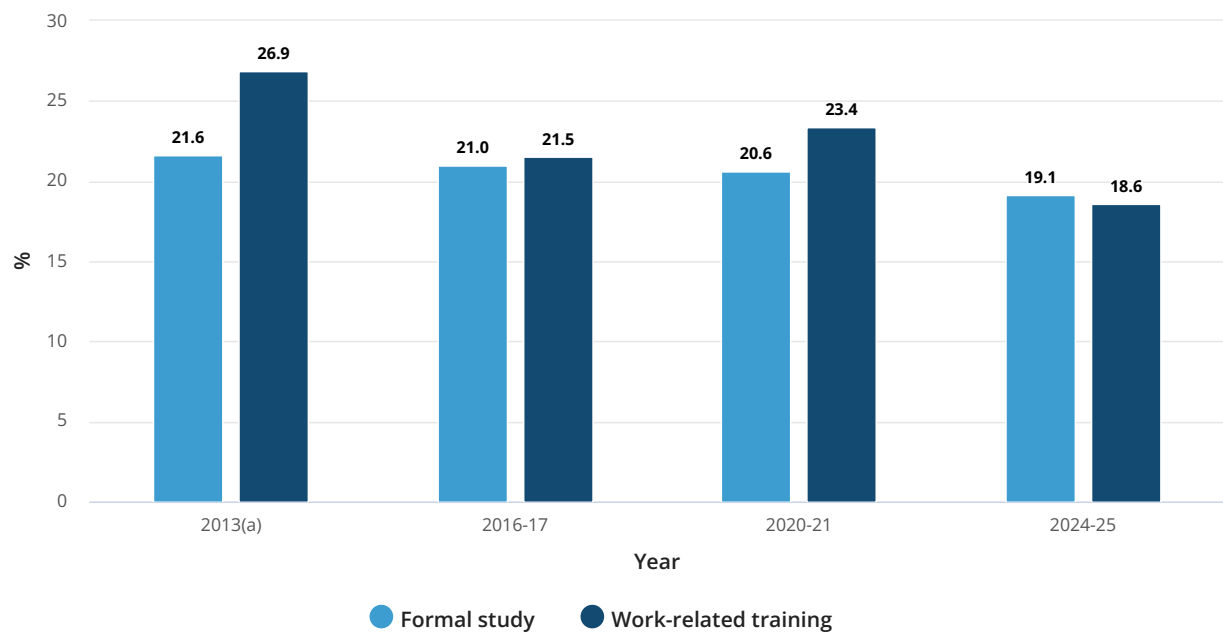
(a) Cells in this diagram have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. Discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

Participation over time

In 2024-25:

- the formal study participation rate decreased to 19% from 21% in 2020-21
- the work-related training participation rate decreased to 19% from 23% in 2020-21.

People aged 15-74 years, participation in study or work-related training, 2013 to 2024-25(a)



(a) Comparing data from 2013 with data from the other survey years should be done with caution due to differences in survey methodologies. Refer to the page [Methodology \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/work-related-training-and-adult-learning-methodology/2024-25\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/work-related-training-and-adult-learning-methodology/2024-25) for more information.

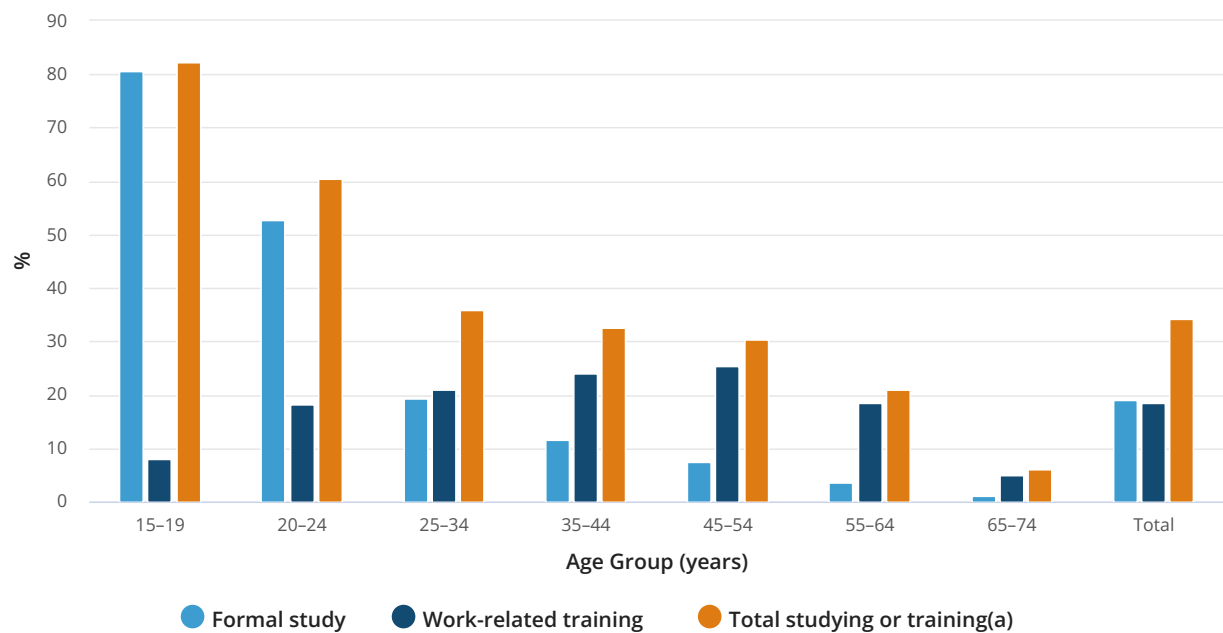
Participation by selected characteristics

In 2024-25, females were more likely to be studying or training than males:

- 20% of females were undertaking formal study compared with 18% of males
- 19% of females participated in work-related training compared with 18% of males.

Younger people were the most likely to be studying for a qualification (81% of 15-19 year olds and 53% of 20-24 year olds).

People aged 15-74 years, participation in study or work-related training, by age groups

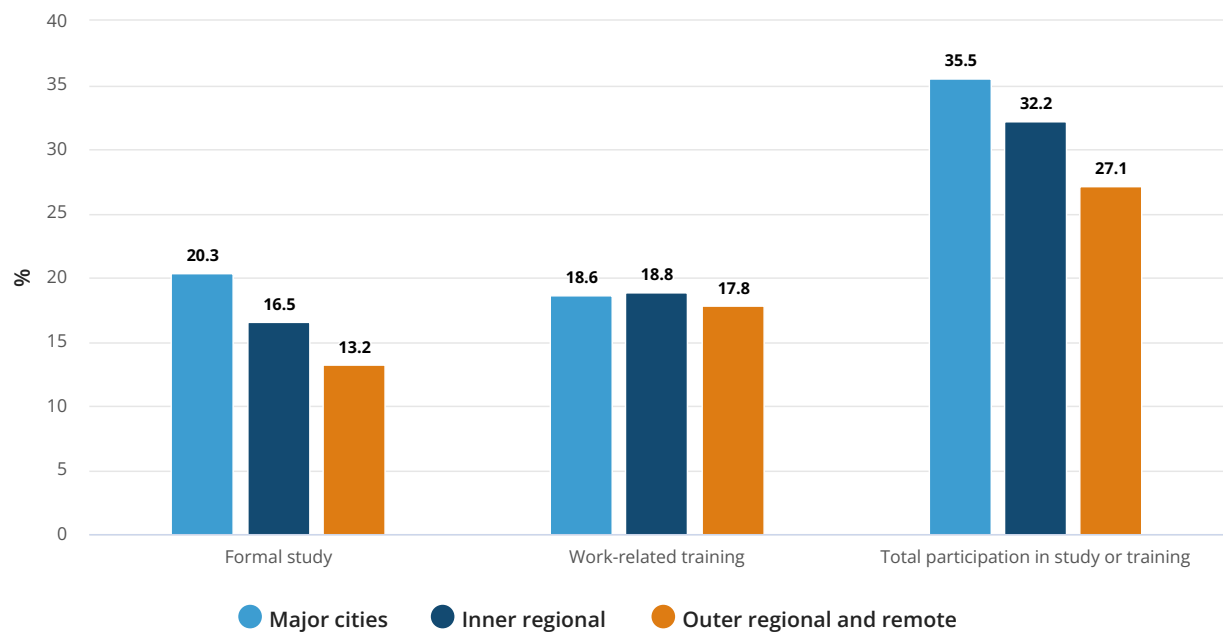


(a) Components may not add to total as people may report participation in more than one category.

People born overseas were a little less likely to have studied or trained in the last 12 months (33%) than people born in Australia (35%).

People who lived in major cities were more likely to undertake formal study (20%) than those living in inner regional areas (17%) or outer regional and remote areas of Australia (13%).

People aged 15-74 years, participation in study or work-related training, by remoteness



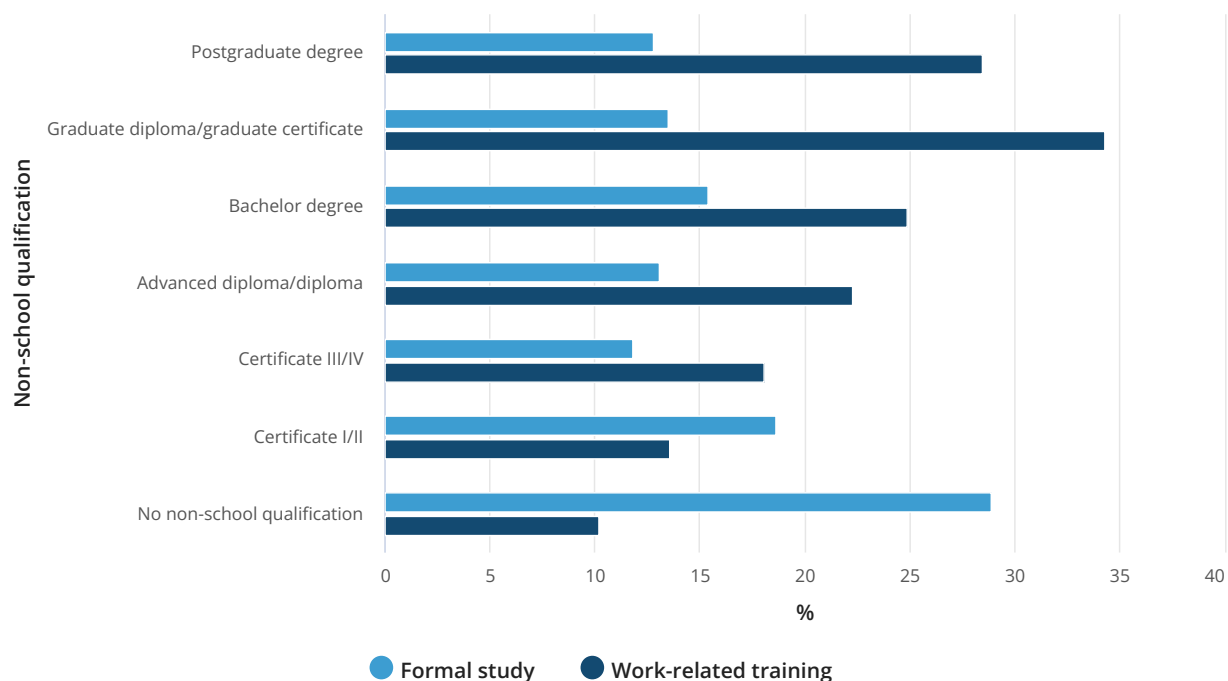
28% of people with disability or restrictive condition participated in study or work-related training compared with 36% who had no disability or restrictive condition.

Females with disability or restrictive condition were more likely than males with disability or restrictive condition to participate in formal study (15% and 12% respectively) and work-related training (18% and 16% respectively).

Qualifications and learning

People who held a non-school qualification were more likely to have participated in work-related training (23%) than in formal study (14%) over the last 12 months. In contrast, people without a non-school qualification were more likely to have undertaken formal study (29%) than work-related training (10%) during that period.

People aged 15-74 years, participation in study and work-related training, by level of highest non-school qualification



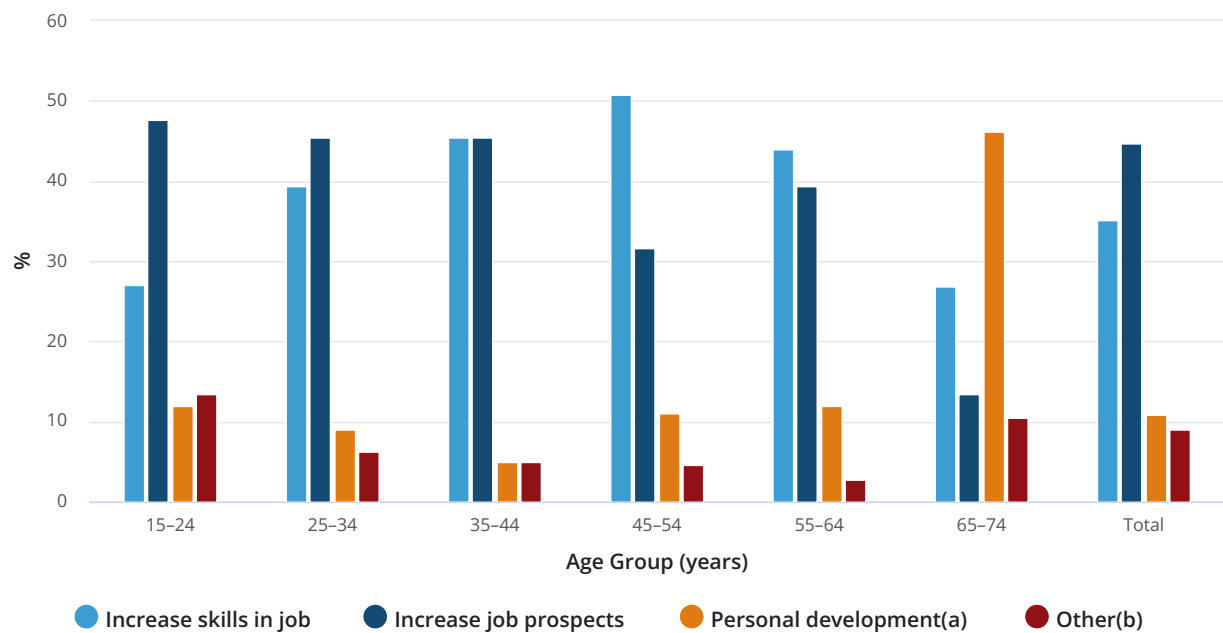
Main reason for participating in learning

For people who undertook formal study for a non-school qualification in the last 12 months, the main reason for participating was:

- to increase their job prospects or change career (45%)
- to increase skills in their job or because it was required for their job (35%)
- for personal development (11%).

For 46% of females and 43% of males who participated in formal study, the main reason for doing it was to increase job prospects or change career. Increasing skills in their job or doing it because it was compulsory was the main reason for 37% of males and 33% of females.

People aged 15-74 years, main reason for participating in formal study, by age groups



(a) Includes Increase skills for community/voluntary work, Increase confidence/meet people and Enjoyment/interest.

(b) Includes Pathway to further study.

Work-related training

While people aged 15-64 years were the most likely to have participated in work-related training (21%), 5% of 65-74 year olds also participated in work-related training in the last 12 months.

Of those who had participated in work-related training in the last 12 months, 75% of females acquired new skills or knowledge compared with 72% of males.

Number of courses completed

When looking at employed people who participated in work-related training for their current main job or business, 59% of sales workers, 57% of professionals and 56% of community and personal service workers completed three or more courses.

Employed people aged 15-74 years, number of work-related training courses completed(a), by occupation in current main job or business



(a) Includes only people who participated in work-related training for their current main job or business.

Personal costs for most recent work-related training

Approximately 1 in 6 people (17%) incurred personal costs for their most recent work-related training in 2024-25. This increased from 1 in 7 people (14%) in 2020-21.

Of those who undertook work-related training in the last 12 months for their current main job or business:

- Just over 1 in 7 people (15%) incurred a personal cost for their most recent training
- 55% with their own business incurred a personal cost for their most recent training compared with 11% of people who are employees
- 23% of community and personal service workers, 18% of professionals, 15% of technicians and 5% of clerical and administrative workers incurred costs for their most recent training.

Employed people aged 15-74 years, personal cost for work-related training in current main job or business, by occupation



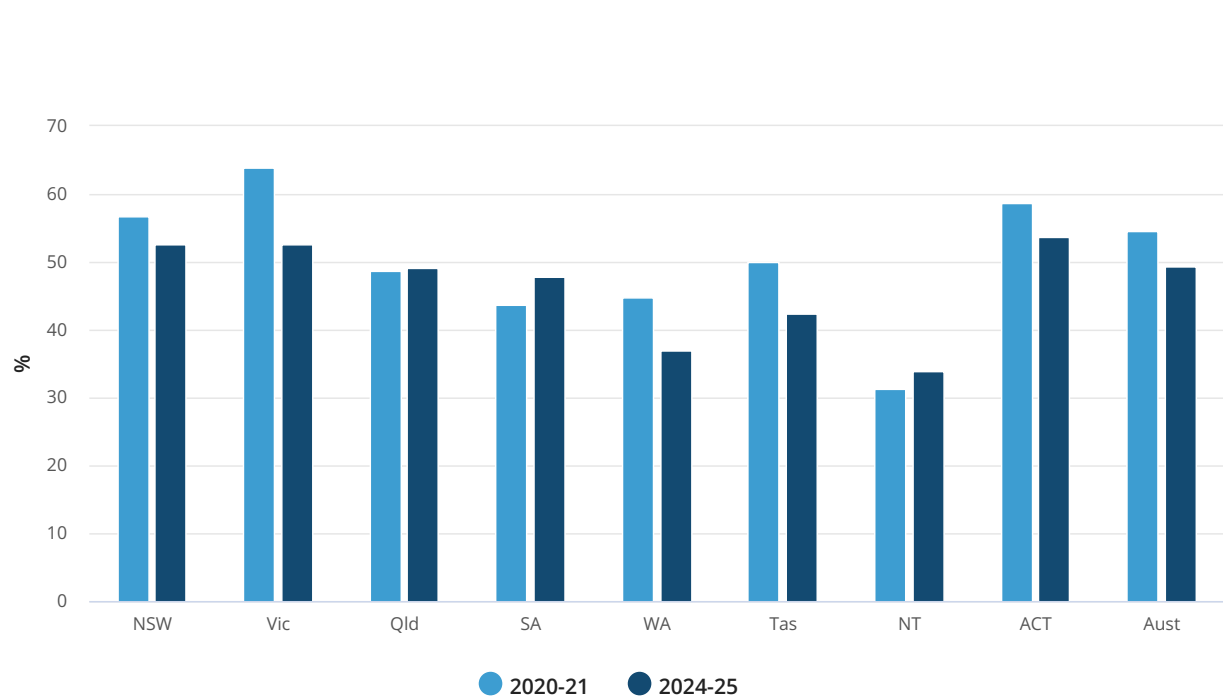
Method of delivery of most recent work-related training

In 2024-25, of those who participated in work-related training, 49% undertook their most recent training online or virtually, compared with 55% in 2020-21. This decrease may be partially explained by impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of people who participated in work-related training:

- 48% participated in face-to-face training
- 54% in the Australian Capital Territory, 53% in New South Wales and 53% in Victoria did online or virtual training
- 60% in Western Australia participated in face-to-face training compared with 37% who did online or virtual training.

People aged 15-74 years, online or virtual delivery of most recent work-related training, by state or territory, 2020-21 and 2024-25



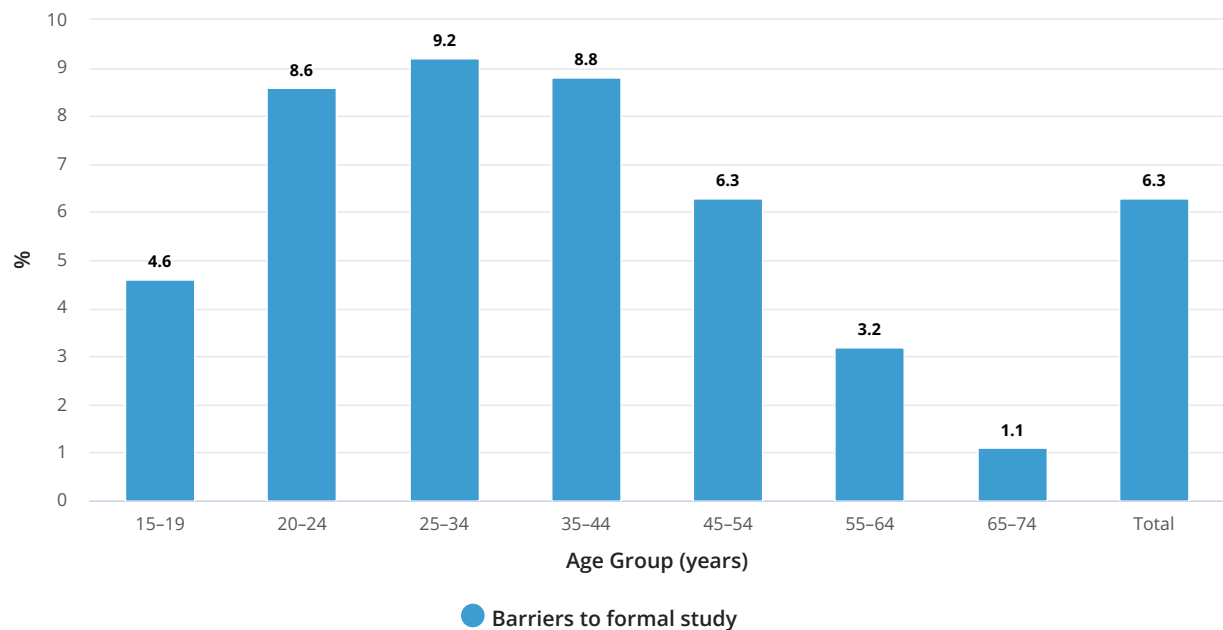
Barriers to formal study

In 2024-25, 6% of people (almost 1.3 million) wanted to undertake formal study for a non-school qualification in the last 12 months but experienced barriers.

This included:

- 3% who wanted to enrol in a bachelor degree or above
- 5% who wanted to enrol in a non-school qualification below bachelor level
- 9% of people aged 20-24 years, 25-34 years and 35-44 years.

People aged 15-74 years, barriers to formal study, by age groups(a)



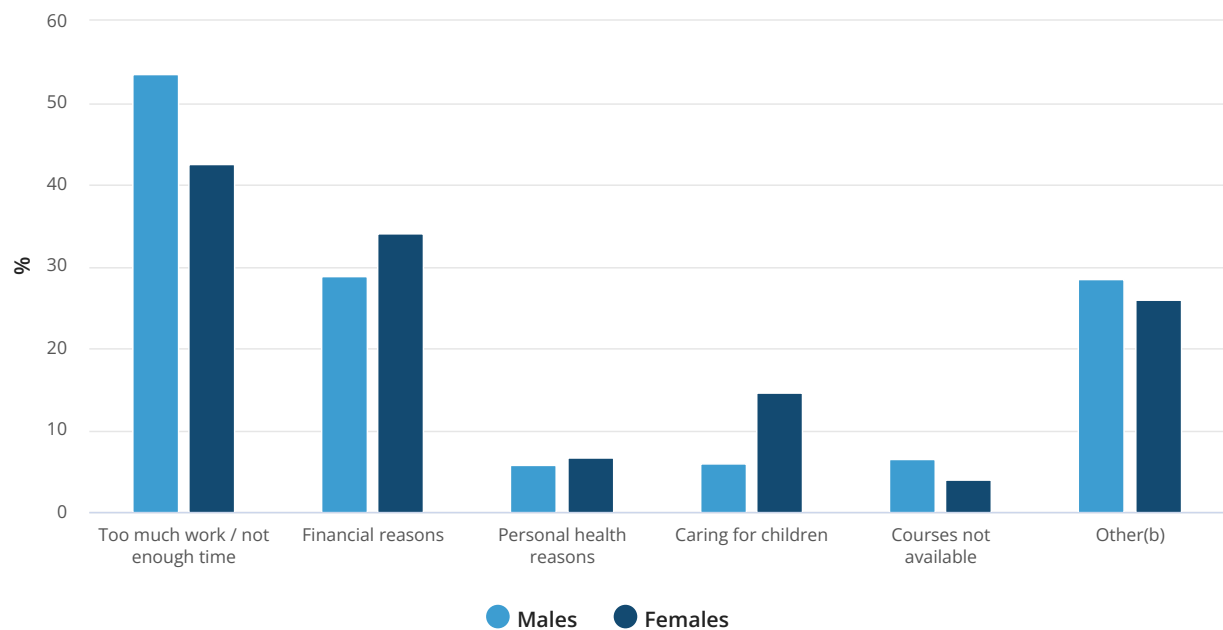
(a) Barriers to formal study relate to non-school qualifications only.

Of those who were enrolled in formal study in the last 12 months, 7% wanted to do additional formal study but did not. 6% of people who had not studied wanted to enrol in formal study.

For those who experienced barriers to formal study:

- Females had more barriers to formal study than males (7% compared with 6%)
- Females were more likely than males to report caring for children as a barrier (15% and 6%, respectively)
- Males were more likely than females to have too much work or not enough time to participate in formal study (54% for males and 43% for females).

People aged 15-74 years, all barriers to formal study(a), by sex

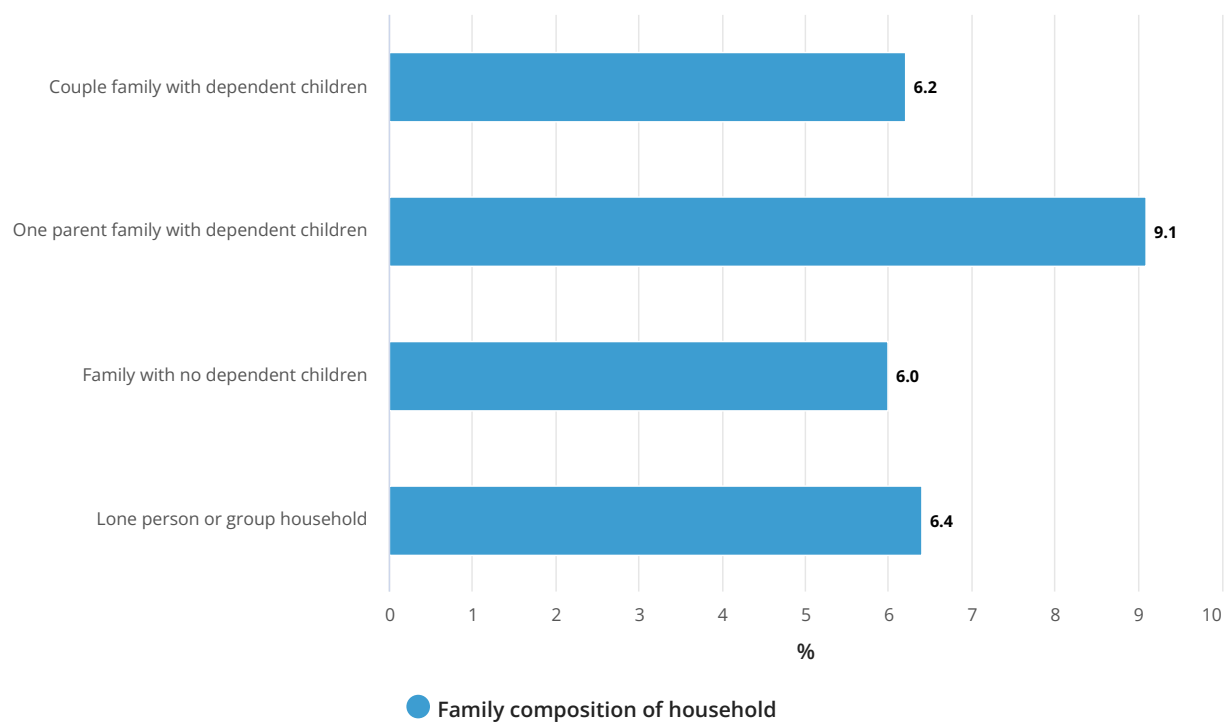


(a) Barriers to formal study relate to non-school qualifications only.

(b) Includes Did not have the pre-requisites.

People in one parent family households with dependent children were more likely to report barriers to formal study than those in couple family households with dependent children (9% compared with 6%).

People aged 15-74 years, barriers to formal study, by family composition of household(a)



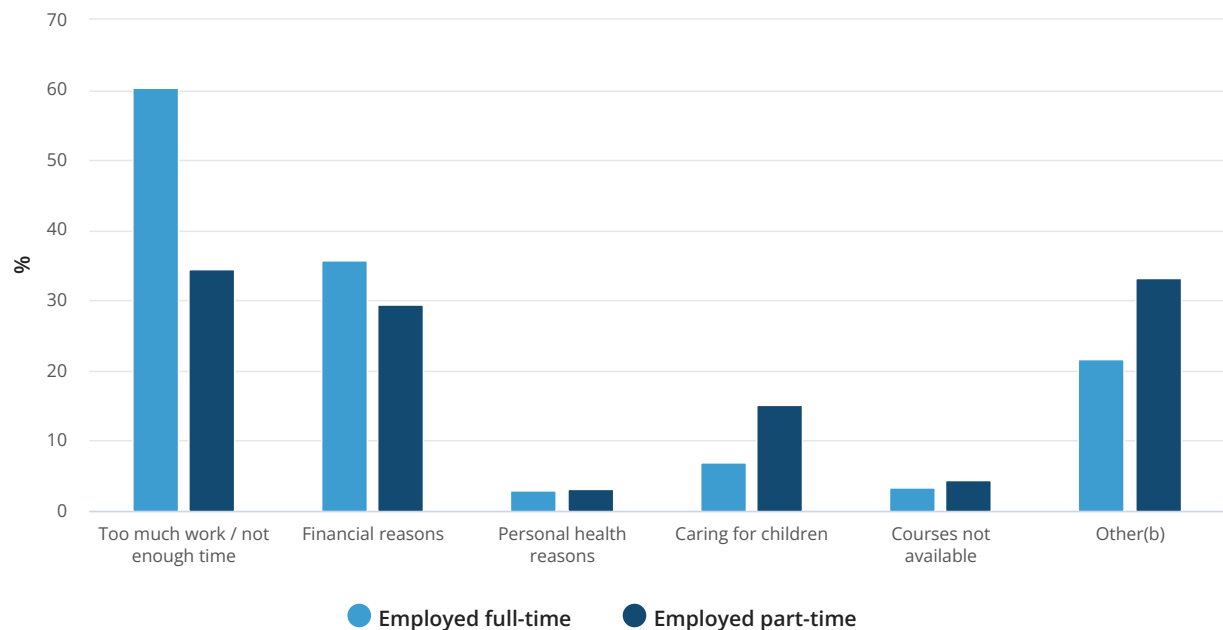
(a) Barriers to formal study relate to non-school qualifications only.

Employed people were half as likely to experience barriers to formal study as unemployed people (7% and 14% respectively), while only 4% of people who weren't in the labour force experienced barriers.

For those who experienced barriers to formal study:

- People working full-time were more likely to report too much work or not enough time as a barrier than those employed part-time (60% compared with 34% respectively)
- 15% of people working part-time said that caring for children was a barrier for them compared with 7% of those working full-time
- 34% of people who were employed reported financial reasons as a barrier to participation in formal study while 32% who were unemployed reported the same barrier.

Employed people aged 15-74 years, all barriers to formal study(a), by employment status



(a) Barriers to formal study relate to non-school qualifications only.

(b) Includes Did not have the pre-requisites.

Those who reported having disability or restrictive condition were twice as likely to experience barriers to formal study than those without disability or restrictive condition (10% compared with 5% respectively).

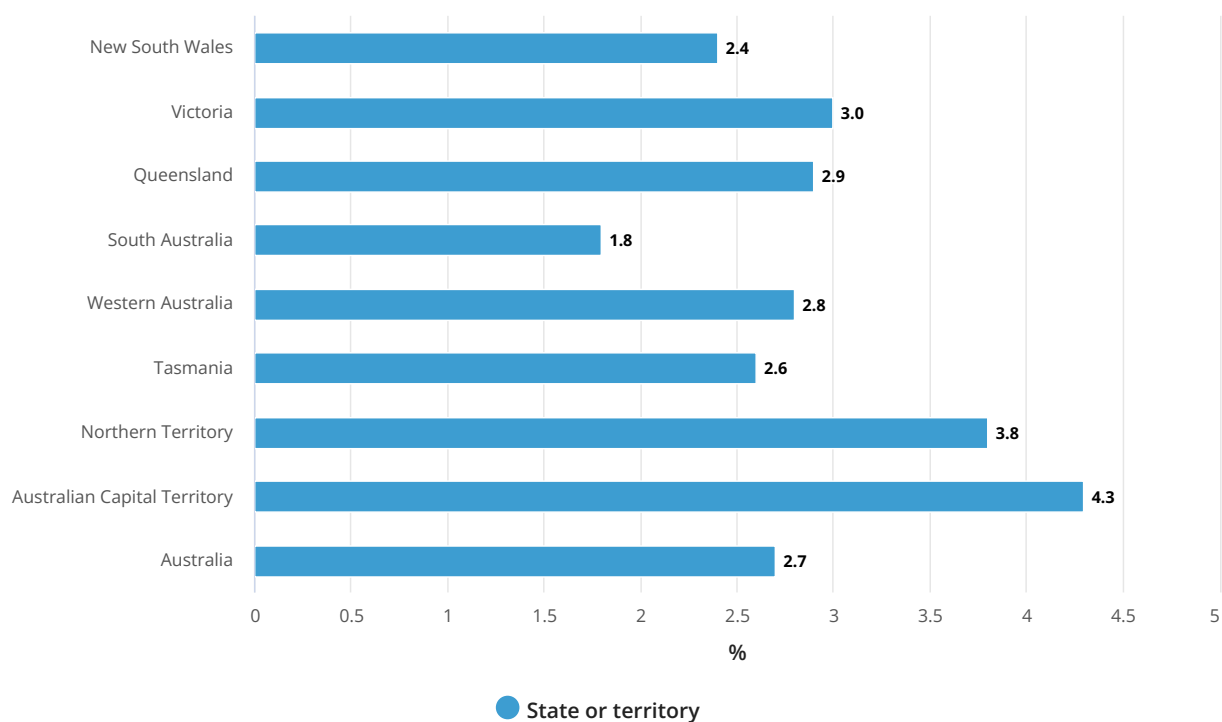
Barriers to formal study by level of qualification

Around 1 in 8 unemployed people (13%) reported barriers to enrolling in a non-school qualification below bachelor level compared with 5% of employed people and 3% of people not in the labour force.

There were 3% of people who were employed and 4% who were unemployed that reported barriers to studying at bachelor level or higher. Those not in the labour force were least likely (1%) to report barriers to studying at bachelor level or higher.

People who experienced barriers to studying at bachelor level or higher varied by state or territory. 4% of people in the Australian Capital Territory experienced barriers compared with 2% in South Australia.

People aged 15-74 years, barriers to studying at bachelor level or higher, by state or territory



Barriers to work-related training

In 2024-25, 5% of people aged 15-74 years had wanted to undertake work-related training in the last 12 months but did not.

Of people who had already done some work-related training in the last 12 months, around 15% wanted to do more. This included:

- Almost 23% of people with disability or restrictive condition
- 12% with no disability or restrictive condition.

Main barrier to work-related training

Of people with barriers to work-related training, the most commonly reported main barriers were:

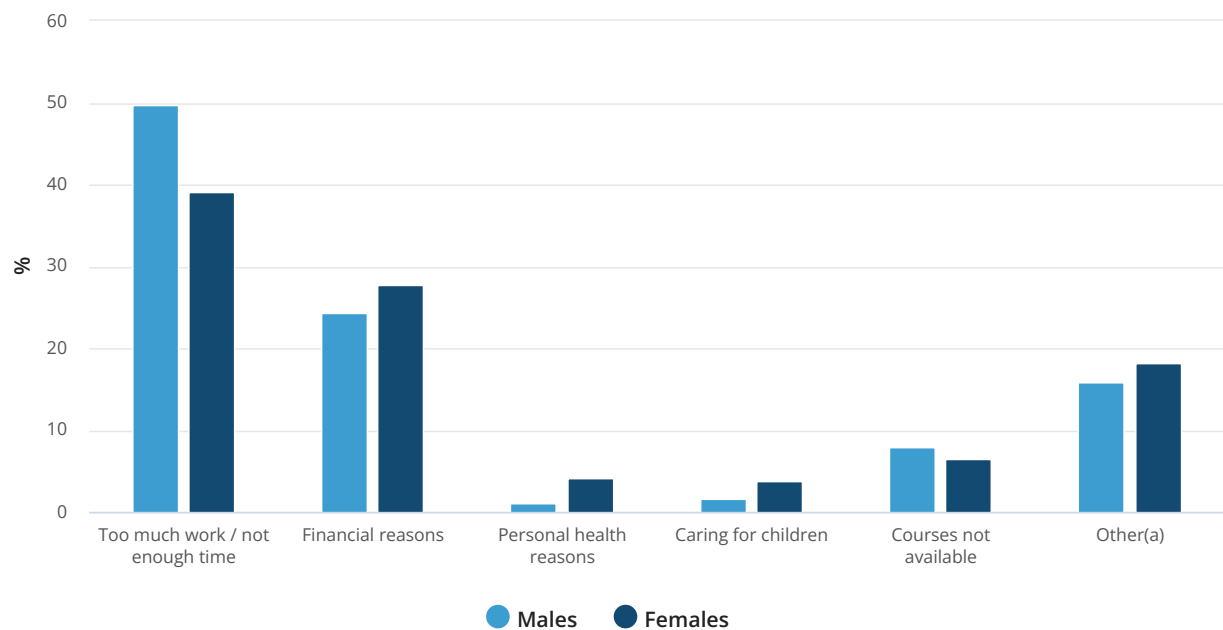
- having too much work or not enough time (44%)
- financial reasons (26%).

Females (5%) were more likely than males (4%) to report barriers to work-related training.

Of people with barriers:

- 50% of males and 40% of females reported having too much work or not enough time as their main barrier
- 28% of females and 24% of males reported financial reasons as their main barrier.

People aged 15-74 years, main barrier to work-related training, by sex

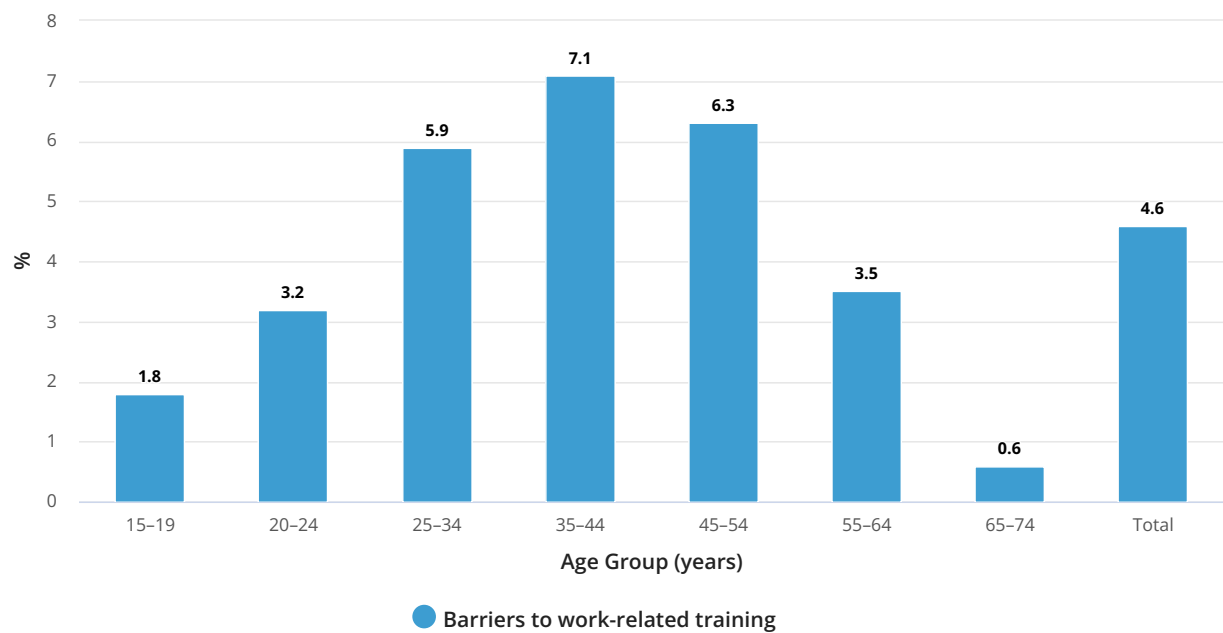


(a) Includes did not have the pre-requisites.

Barriers to work-related training were experienced by:

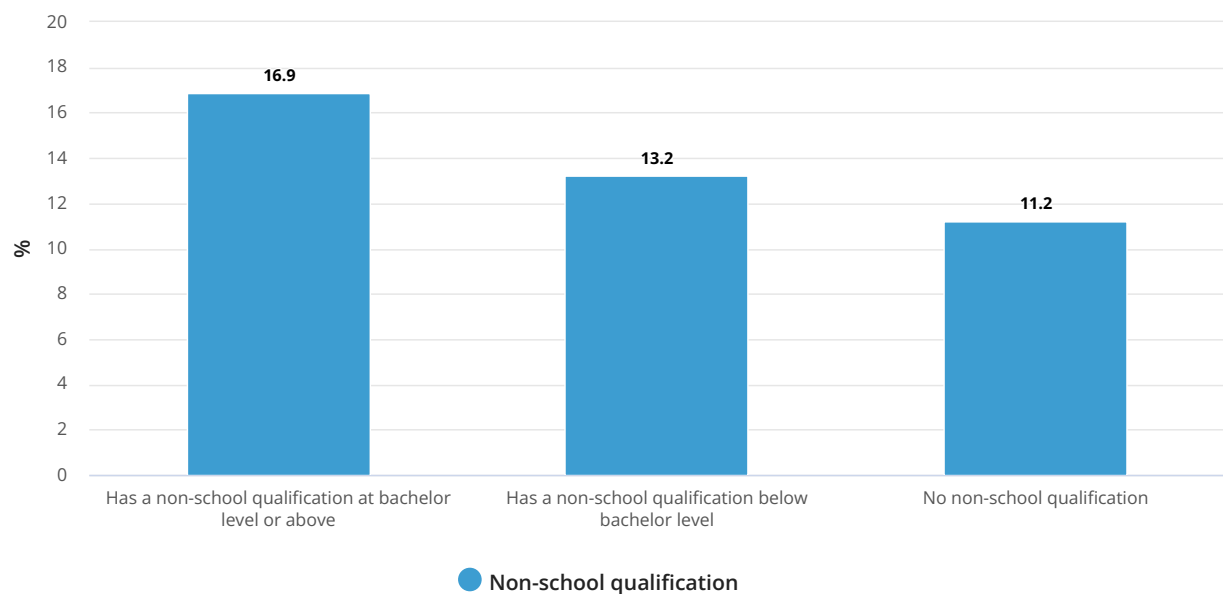
- 7% of people aged 35-44 years
- 6% aged 25-34 and 45-54 years
- 4% of those aged 55-64 years.

People aged 15-74 years, barriers to work-related training, by age groups



17% of people with a non-school qualification at bachelor level or higher who participated in work-related training experienced barriers to doing more work-related training. This compares with 13% of people with a non-school qualification below bachelor level, and 11% of those without any non-school qualification.

People aged 15-74 years, barriers to participating in more work-related training, by non-school qualification(a)



(a) Includes people who participated in work-related training and wanted to do more.

In outer regional and remote areas, 11% of people with barriers to work-related training said courses not being available was their main barrier, compared to 7% of people in major cities who reported the same main barrier.

Data downloads

Work-Related Training and Adult Learning

[Download all \(382.76 KB\)](#)

Work-Related Training and Adult Learning 2024-25, Tables 1 to 14

[Download XLSX](#)

[344.54 KB]

(/statistics/people/education/work-related-training-and-adult-learning/2024-25/WRTAL%202024_25%20Tables.xlsx)

Work-Related Training and Adult Learning 2024-25, Data Item List

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[161.8 KB]

(/statistics/people/education/work-related-training-and-adult-learning/2024-25/WRTAL%202024_25%20Data%20item%20list.xlsx)

Methodology

Scope

People aged 15–74 years who were usual residents of private dwellings.

Excludes:

- Australian permanent defence force members and their dependants
- non-Australian defence forces
- residents in very remote Australia and the Indigenous Community Strata.

Geography

Data available for:

- Australia
- States and territories
- Major cities
- Inner regional
- Outer regional/remote.

Source

Multipurpose Household Survey

Collection method

Interviews were conducted by telephone with responses directly recorded in an electronic questionnaire.

Proxy interviews were permissible under certain circumstances.

Concepts, sources and methods

Education data are coded to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\), 2001](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-standard-classification-education-ascend/2001#data-collection) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-standard-classification-education-ascend/2001#data-collection>).

History of changes

From 2024–25, persons resident in very remote areas of Australia were excluded from the survey.

[View full methodology \(/methodologies/work-related-training-and-adult-learning-methodology/2024-25\)](/methodologies/work-related-training-and-adult-learning-methodology/2024-25)